What is Anxiety?

I am not anxious. I am just extremely well educated about all the things that can go catastrophically wrong.
What is Anxiety?

* Feared stimulus of some type

* Some behavior designed to mitigate and/or avoid the anxiety
I've got 99 problems and 86 of them are completely made up scenarios in my head that I'm stressing about for absolutely no logical reason.

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Cycle of Anxiety

http://www.cognitive-behaviour-therapy.co.za/disorders_anxiety.htm
How things go from bad to worse

* Individual feels anxiety
* Engages in behavior
* Behavior coincidentally occurs at the point in the anxiety cycle where it would decrease and/or decreases anxiety by removing the individual from the anxiety provoking situation
* Behavior is reinforced by the decrease in anxiety
(A person is confronted with an anxiety-producing situation which leads to an uncomfortable sense of worry and agitation.)

(The anxiety-producing situation is avoided, and the person receives a feeling of relief. However, next time the anxiety will be worse.)
I stress about stress before there’s even stress to stress about. Then I stress about stressing over stress that doesn’t need to be stressed about. It’s stressful.
What does it look like at home or school?

- Sometimes … nothing
- Fight, flight or freeze
- Irritability
- Unpredictable reactions
- Attendance issues
- Smart, capable kids who can’t finish work, turn it in, and/or don’t do well on tests
- Inattention and restlessness
- Troubling answering questions when called on
- Frequent trips to the nurse
What does treatment look like?

wanted to hide but did the thing anyway
What does treatment look like?

* Exposure to the thing that makes them anxious WITHOUT the avoidant behavior
Cycle of Anxiety

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What can schools do to help when a student skips class because of anxiety caused by skipping too many classes?
What can schools can do to help

• Help the family access resources
• Assist with developing and implementing exposure protocols
• Assist with appropriate adaptations or modifications to assignments or school days
  • http://www.worrywisekids.org/node/40
• Find places the student can go to calm down and/or people they can access as resources
  • Consider implementation of classroom or school-wide strategies
• Avoid reinforcing the student’s fears
What parents can do to help

ANXIETY GIRL!

able to jump to the worst conclusion in a single bound!
What can we do to help

* Be brave
* Help the child face their fears
* Reassure them, but don’t remove them
* Teach them how to label and explain their emotions
* Teach them ways to manage their anxiety
* Make it clear that your goal is not to eliminate anxiety, but to not let it stop them from doing the things they want